

Monsanto Backgrounder

MONSANTO'S INVOLVEMENT IN VOLUNTARY PROTECTION PROGRAM

MONSANTO COMPANY/ST. LOUIS, MO.

Number of participating facilities:

Forty-six U.S. facilities will participate in the VPP which include all operating plants and service centers. Excluded are certain independent warehousing locations, office centers and laboratories.

Ex-U.S. locations participation in VPP:

Even though OSHA rules and regulations do not apply ex-U.S., the principles of a good safety and health program do apply. All ex-U.S. Monsanto locations will accept these principles contained in the VPP guidelines and the effort will be much the same as here in the U.S.

Number of employees covered at U.S. plants: 18,489

Union locals participating: ICWU, USA, IUE, OCAW and IBT

Process to gain Star certification:

Management, employees and OSHA commit to work together to achieve the plant's safety goals; a detailed safety program that complies with OSHA requirements is then drafted; the plant implements its program; OSHA performs a rigorous audit to verify that the program meets Star criteria and its accident rate is below the rest of the industry; if the plant passes, OSHA formally recognizes the site as a Star facility and takes it off the list for routine scheduled inspections. OSHA will verify that the plant continues to meet VPP criteria and may investigate specific incidents.

Current safety record:

In 1991, Monsanto and its subsidiaries in the U.S. had 2.09 cases of work-related injury or illness per 100 workers. According to the latest Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) publication, this same measure for the chemical industry as a whole was 5.9 cases per 100 workers. For U.S. manufacturing, the BLS figure for injuries and illness was 11.9 per 100 workers. This indicates that the company's many safety programs already in place are making a difference. Participation in the VPP should improve those statistics even more.

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SAFETY AT MONSANTO

MONSANTO COMPANY/ST. LOUIS, MO.

Safety is Monsanto's number one priority. An important component of the Monsanto Pledge, the company's environmental health and safety platform, is to ensure no Monsanto operation poses any undue risk to employees or the community.

All manufacturing locations have had safety programs and goals since the 1940s. In 1977, the company established worldwide environmental, safety and health guidelines. In 1984, following the tragedy in Bhopal, India, a high hazard materials (HHM) task force was formed to study the handling, manufacturing, storage and transport of certain priority chemicals. An audit program was later implemented which resulted in many important changes. Monsanto opened its plants to the public and made its safety data sheets publicly available prior to any community right to know legislation from Congress.

Today, the evolution continues with a wide range of state-of-the-art programs designed to protect workers:

Pre-Construction Review

Plans for the construction of new Monsanto plants or processes are subjected to several safety reviews. The purpose is to make certain that various national safety codes and construction requirements are met as well as Monsanto's own, often more stringent, standards. These reviews sometimes lead to construction changes or process modifications to reduce risk.

Safety Audits and Reviews

Review of safety programs at Monsanto's operations is a continuous process. Surveys are conducted to review training, equipment inspection schedules, safety manuals and overall management of the effort.

Beginning this year, the safety surveys are being replaced by a more rigorous compliance auditing program which focuses on a site's adherence to both regulatory and Monsanto requirements. These audits are far more intensive than the current survey programs and are expected to be of more value to the sites. They include not only a review of compliance but an analysis of the management systems intended to generate and sustain that compliance.

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Emergency Response Training

Monsanto employees who work with hazardous materials are given detailed training on how to do so safely and how to respond to an emergency. New employees are given this training before they begin work, and safety information is regularly reviewed with existing employees. Operating manuals, available at appropriate manufacturing processes, provide information on potential hazards and safety procedures. These manuals are updated as new information is developed.

At larger Monsanto plants, certain employees are given special training to become in-house fire fighters and emergency rescue personnel. They drill regularly. In addition, at some three dozen Monsanto plants, the company maintains teams of employees schooled in firefighting, spill containment and cleanup, and emergency medical procedures. They are on 24-hour-a-day call, both to react to problems at our plants and to help other companies or local responders handle chemical accidents.

Protecting Worker Health

A team of more than 100 physicians, toxicologists and epidemiologists, and another 50 industrial hygienists work closely with management to protect employee health. This includes ensuring chemical exposure levels are below government standards. Worker health protection programs at all locations are evaluated every one to three years and will become subject to more formal auditing programs and procedures early in 1992. A computerized system stores employee data and provides rapid access to data about potential health and environmental effects.

Contractor Safety

A new program is currently being pilot tested to improve safety performance of contract workers. This program will pre-qualify contractors, and include past safety performance in selection and approval processes. Monsanto's Chemical unit has developed an injury/illness record-keeping protocol for contractors which will be evaluated and then expanded to all U.S. sites during 1992.

Responsible Care

In 1989, Monsanto Company joined with other major chemical companies to establish the Chemical Manufacturers Association's Responsible Care initiative. Responsible Care is the most ambitious environmental, safety and health commitment ever undertaken by a manufacturing industry in the United States. Monsanto extended this commitment worldwide and it is one of the leading companies encouraging the adoption of this type of initiative throughout the world.

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Many of the Responsible Care guiding principles involve the safe manufacture, transportation, use and disposal of chemicals. Many of Monsanto's programs to fulfill elements of the Monsanto Pledge, also fulfill goals set by Responsible Care.

Community Communications

To ensure its communities, particularly around its operations, are well informed about its processes, products and even releases to the environment, Monsanto conducts a variety of programs including: plant tours for emergency response officials and often for members of the public; coordinated emergency response training between the plant and outside agencies; open houses; community meetings; and the newest route of public access, community advisory committees.

Voluntary Protection Program

On February 4, 1992, Monsanto announced a commitment to participate in the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's Voluntary Protection Program (VPP). Further, it will strive for "Star" status, the highest level of recognition given by the agency for outstanding safety performance, for all its U.S. facilities within five years. To earn Star status, each facility must undergo a rigorous OSHA audit that shows its safety programs and practices reach various levels of excellence and its accident rate is below the rest of the industry. Forty-six Monsanto operating facilities in the U.S. will strive to qualify for VPP certification. Although facilities in other world areas are not subject to OSHA review, they will apply similar standards.

Measurements of Success

These programs are meaningless unless they result in fewer injuries. The record demonstrates that these programs are doing a good job. The chemical industry continues to be a leader among the major industries monitored by the National Safety Council and Monsanto's occupational injury and illness rate is among the lowest in the chemical industry.

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Safety can never be taken for granted. Monsanto believes its programs are on the right track and will stop at nothing less than an injury free environment.

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